



The President's Daily Brief

4 June 1970

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LATE ITEM

CAMBODIA

According to a report from the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, a Communist force of undetermined size captured the village of Setbo Leu, about ten miles southeast of the Cambodian capital, early today. Few details are available, but air support is being used in an effort to halt the advance. This is the closest Communist move to date toward Phnom Penh. The fact that the thrust coincided with the arrival in Phnom Penh of South Vietnamese Vice President Ky suggests that it was intended to cause maximum political embarrassment to the Lon Nol regime. It probably does not represent a serious military threat to the security of the capital.

The embassy also reported that in the north, the city of Kompong Thom has come under attack from three sides and that part of it is in enemy hands. There has been a buildup of Communist forces around the city in recent days and government defenders there have been predicting an assault.

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The deployments of Vietnamese Communist main force infantry units since allied cross-border operations commenced in late April [redacted] Page 1.

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The Communists moved sizable quantities of supplies through the Laos panhandle last month, but relatively few new troops were introduced into the infiltration system. (Page 3)

In Bonn [redacted]

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[redacted] (Page 4)

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Argentina [redacted]

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[redacted] (Page 5)

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The Soviet performance at the four-power talks Tuesday is viewed as another manifestation of the tough line Moscow has recently been taking on the Middle East to force concessions from Israel. (Page 6)

Latin American reactions to the US plan to limit national jurisdictions over the continental shelf are summarized on Page 7.

[redacted] in Turkey. (Page 7)

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Movement of Enemy Units - 30 April-3 June



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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA

There has been a general movement of Communist main force infantry units from their long-time safehavens along the South Vietnamese - Cambodian border since allied cross-border operations began in late April. Communications intelligence provides a fairly complete picture of these movements, which involve some 11 enemy regiments and their respective divisional headquarters. With few exceptions, these elements have moved to the west or north-west--deeper into Cambodia.

Most, but not all, of these relocations appear to have been in direct response to allied operations, reflecting the enemy's anxiety to avoid contact while dropping back to more secure areas. At least five first-line combat regiments which have pulled back from the border remain inside the 21.7-mile limit on US operations. These units evidently elected to disperse and seek cover to avoid detection. Another regiment--the North Vietnamese 95C--remains just across the border from western Tay Ninh Province, but continues to move about within Base Area 354. Only one regiment--the North Vietnamese 209th--actually moved from Cambodia back into South Vietnam, where it posed a threat to allied positions in northern Tay Ninh Province before moving back into Cambodia on 1 June. Although elements of the North Vietnamese 24th Regiment have been moving supplies in the far reaches of northeastern Cambodia, most of the enemy's forces that are normally deployed along the border opposite South Vietnam's central highlands have been operating for some time farther to the north in Kontum Province and adjacent areas of Laos.

In at least one instance, an enemy unit which has apparently sought to evade allied sweeps has at the same time put itself in position to increase pressure in a key sector of Cambodia. This unit, the North Vietnamese 101D Regiment, left its base area in the Seven Mountains region of Chau Doc Province and moved more than 25 miles into southern Cambodia. Because a sister regiment--the 18B--remained behind, we suspect that the westward move of the 101D was intended to improve the Communists' military position near the coast.

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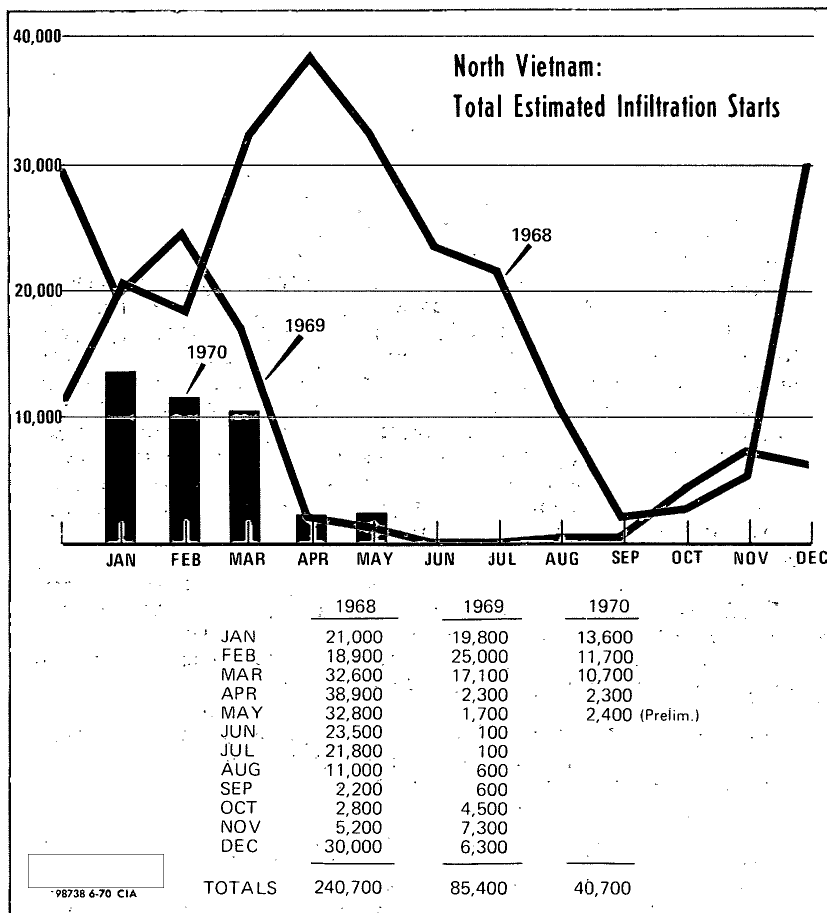
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Two Communist regiments that normally operate in South Vietnam's III Corps have been involved in offensive operations against major Cambodian targets. The 5th Division's 275th Regiment helped overrun the Cambodian provincial capital of Kratie. It has since crossed the Mekong River and is now well into north-central Cambodia. The 9th Division's 272nd Regiment, meanwhile, has been in combat in northern Prey Veng Province. Other first-line combat units may have assisted rear guard and security forces in the enemy's effort to secure sectors of northeastern Cambodia as a terminal for logistic and reinforcement routes from the north.

Major staff sections of COSVN, including the main political headquarters, have also withdrawn deeper into Cambodia and are now situated near the Mekong River, some 34 miles north of South Vietnam's Tay Ninh Province border. It is increasingly apparent that this area is being used as a fall back position from which enemy staffs can carry on necessary functions until they can drift back closer to the border.

In sum, the Communists have in most cases responded skillfully to allied Cambodian operations. For the most part, key combat forces have used evasive tactics. In only a few instances have the Communists chosen to stand and slug it out, and these occasions may have been diversionary to allow larger units to escape. While most enemy units moved to evade allied operations, a few went on the offensive against relatively weak Cambodian targets to gain control of the more remote regions of northeastern Cambodia.

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NORTH VIETNAM

The Communists have succeeded in moving substantial quantities of supplies through the Laotian panhandle during May in spite of rain and bombings. A recently intercepted message shows that shipments into the southern panhandle in the first three weeks of May averaged 72 tons a day. During May last year the North Vietnamese were in the process of virtually closing down their logistics and infiltration system for the rainy season.

The continued movement of large quantities of supplies during May, when road conditions deteriorate markedly, underscores the Communists' determination to make up the losses caused by recent allied operations.

The three battalion-sized units plus two smaller groups forecast last week entered the pipeline on schedule. Infiltration totals for May stand at about 2,400 troops. There are still no indications that Hanoi intends to increase the flow of replacement infiltration groups to the South in the near future.

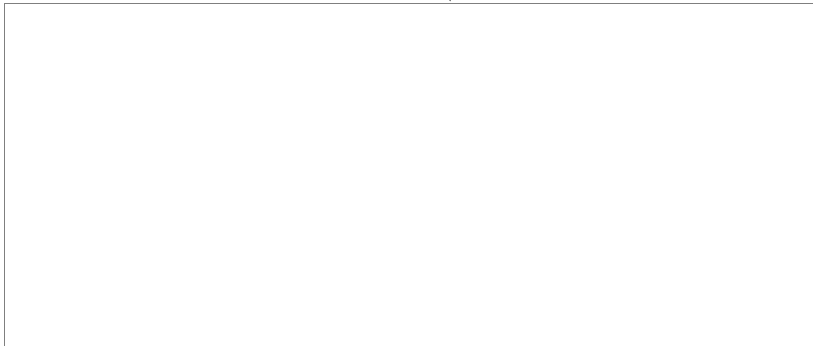
There are some signs, however, that combat units from the North Vietnamese 304th Division, now based about 30 miles north of the DMZ, may be moving southward. The two regiments involved, the 9th and the 24B, both have recently been in touch with other division components in Quang Tri Province, and elements of the 9th were located in Laos opposite the DMZ area on 1 June.

The 304th Division already has sent its 66th Regiment to northern South Vietnam. The southward movement of the other regiments might be either reinforcements or a periodic rotation of forces.

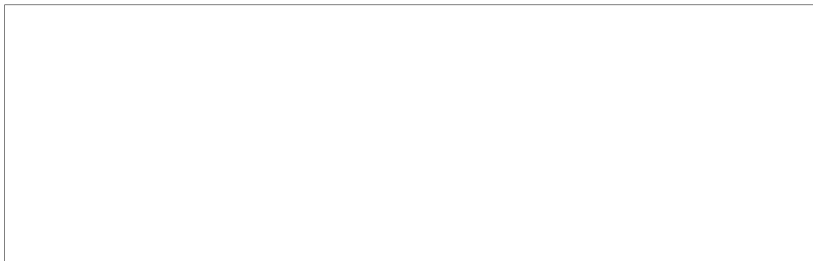
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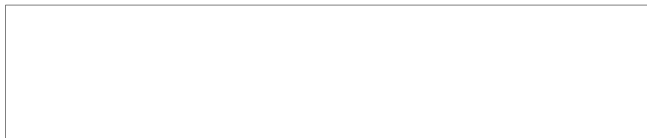
WEST GERMANY



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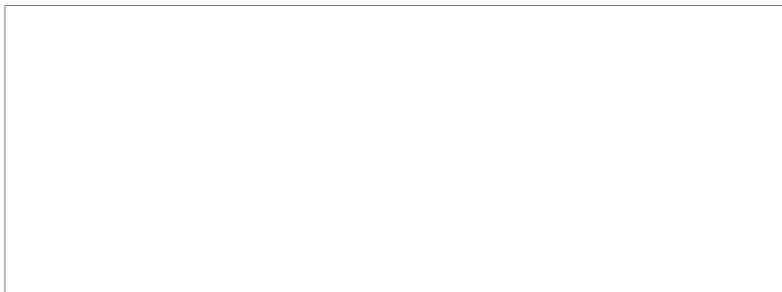


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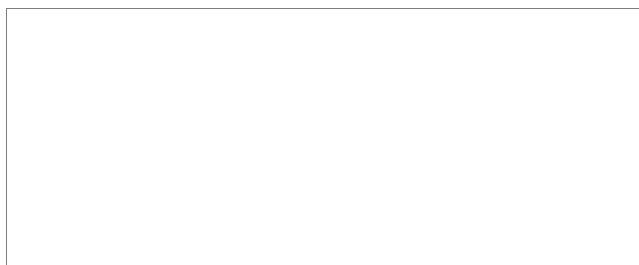
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ARGENTINA



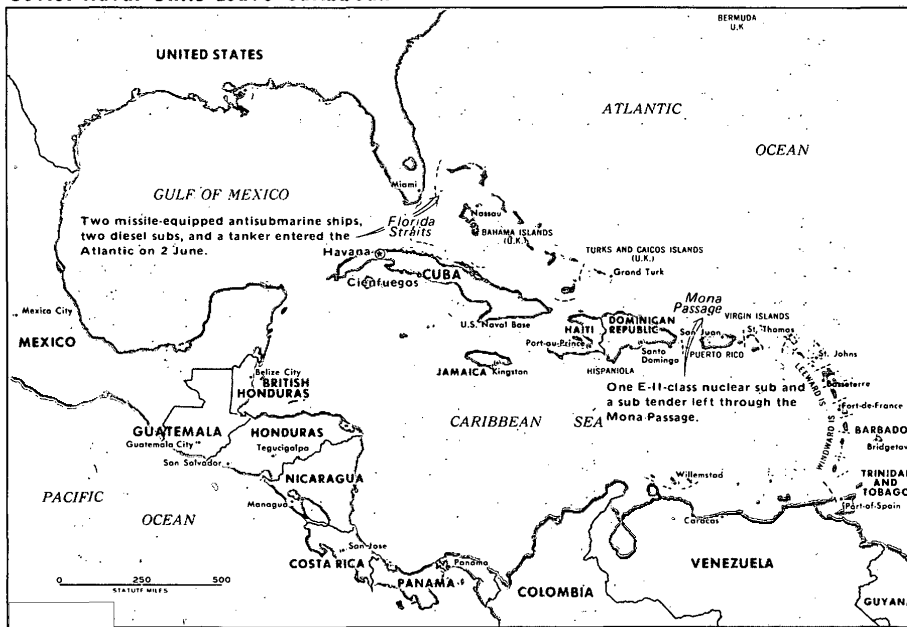
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Soviet Naval Units Leave Caribbean



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NOTES

USSR - Middle East: [] we took note of the hard line Soviet propagandists are currently taking on the Middle East, speculating that this was part of a bid by the Kremlin to squeeze concessions out of Israel. The Soviet performance at Tuesday's session of the four-power talks in New York seems to be another manifestation of this policy. Deputy Soviet UN representative Mendelevich claimed the USSR could no longer accept even minor changes in Israel's borders with the Arab states. He rationalized this retreat from the Soviets' explicit acceptance on 5 March of minor border alterations on the ground that the US and Israel were interpreting "rectifications" too broadly. We share Ambassador Yost's view that in the end the Soviets would be willing to accept border changes if the Arabs went along.

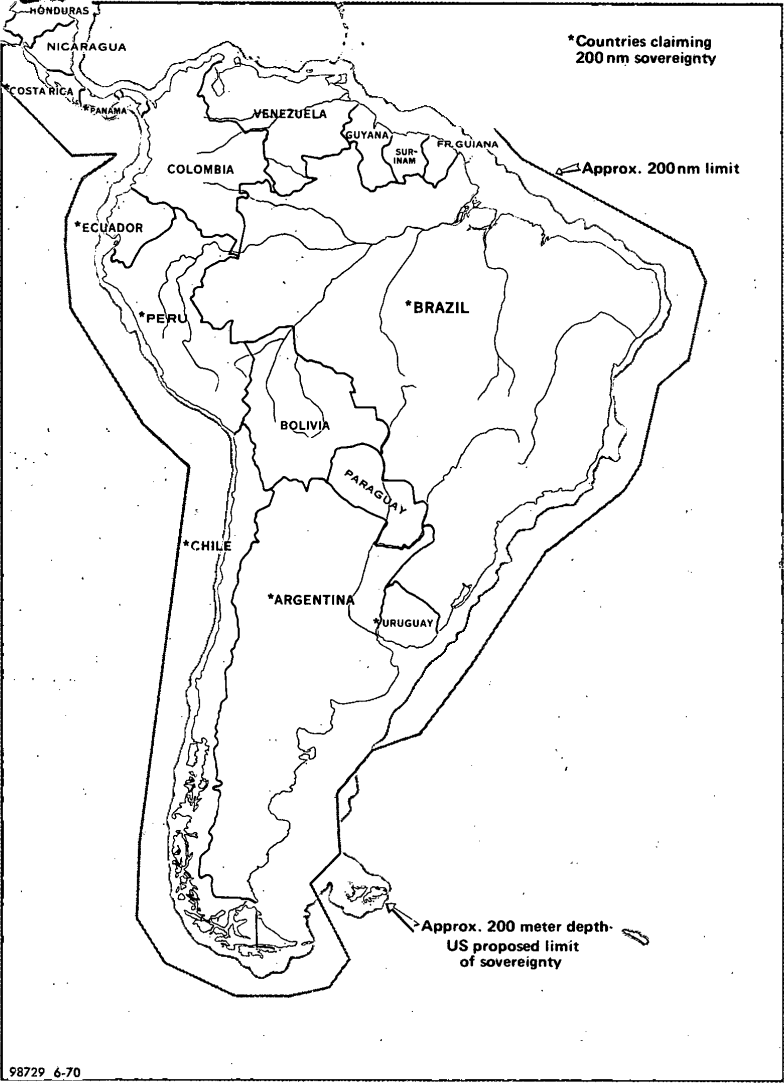
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USSR: The group of Soviet warships that has been operating in the Caribbean area for the past three weeks apparently is returning to home waters. During their stay, the Soviet ships visited Cienfuegos and Havana, and cruised in the Gulf of Mexico.

Arab States: The US is likely to be the object of bitter rhetoric and public demonstrations tomorrow, the third anniversary of the 1967 war. In fear that observances in Amman might get out of hand, King Husayn has successfully bid for postponement of an "emergency" meeting of heads of Arab states "confronting" Israel. It was to have opened in Cairo tomorrow.


Libya: Premier Qaddafi continues his travels. He is now in Baghdad, where it can be assumed he is again making his case for an embargo on oil sales to the US and other "pro-Israeli" countries in the event we sell more Phantoms to Israel. Damascus will be his next stop. In Libya, there has been no break in the impasse between the government and the oil companies over prices.

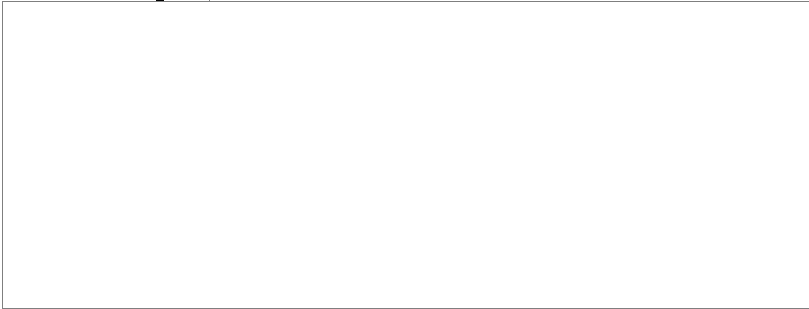

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Latin America: Peru and Ecuador have already officially rejected the US plan to limit national jurisdictions over the continental shelf to a depth of 200 meters. Chile's foreign minister has publicly denounced it, and a Brazilian Foreign Ministry spokesman has complained that the time is not right to discuss it. The Mexican foreign minister has said that the South American countries are putting heavy pressure on his country to follow their lead, but added that Mexico believes the US proposal is a step forward. Peru, meanwhile, has invited those countries that attended the Territorial Limits Conference in Montevideo last month to another conference on sea rights to be held in Lima from 11 to 15 August.

Turkey: 

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